



# Minuteman UPDATE

October 2003

Massachusetts National  
Guard monthly  
newsletter for members,  
families, and friends

Visit the Massachusetts National Guard Website at [www.state.ma.us/guard](http://www.state.ma.us/guard)

## Mass. Guard mourns the loss of a good soldier

The Massachusetts National Guard has lost a good soldier in Kuwait.

The Department of Defense announced the death of Sgt. 1<sup>st</sup> Class Robert E. Rooney, 43, of Nashua, N.H. Rooney died September 25 from injuries following an incident that occurred while moving equipment at Shuabai Port, Kuwait.

Rooney was a member of the 379<sup>th</sup> Engineer Company, Massachusetts Army National Guard, based in Bourne, Mass., which was mobilized in January to support Operation Enduring Freedom. The 379<sup>th</sup> Engineer Company's primary mission is to construct and re-contour

secondary and main roadways. The unit returned to Massachusetts October 4.

Sgt 1<sup>st</sup> Class Rooney was a veteran of Operation Desert Shield/Storm where he served with the 181<sup>st</sup> Engineer Company, the predecessor of the 379<sup>th</sup>. He began his military career in 1982 and served as a full-time employee of the Mass. National Guard at the Unit Training Equipment Site (UTES) on Camp Edwards, Cape Cod for 20 years. UTES services all Mass. National Guard units, providing and maintaining vital equipment for training throughout year.

"Our heartfelt condolences go out to the family and friends of Sergeant First

Class Rooney. The loss of a soldier is a tragedy felt by all of us, from his fellow soldiers to those whose lives he has touched in the community," said Major General George W. Keefe, The Adjutant General for the Massachusetts National Guard. "Sergeant Rooney was a devoted husband, father and a respected colleague. We mourn his loss. He honors his family, his unit and the National Guard with his dedication, service and sacrifice for our nation." Sgt. 1<sup>st</sup> Class Rooney resided in New Hampshire and is survived by his wife and three children.

The incident is currently under investigation.

## 772nd MPs honored for Afghanistan duty

by Master Sgt. Pallas deBettencourt, JFHQ-MA PAO

Members of the 772<sup>nd</sup> Military Police Company from Taunton returned home last March, after spending approximately seven months overseas in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

The unit's mission was to provide security supporting Central Command in support of the Coalition Joint Civil-Military Task Force compound, the Kabul Military Training Center, and Bagram Air Base in Afghanistan.

An awards ceremony was held Sept. 27 to recognize these soldiers for their sacrifice and honorable service. "While In Afghanistan, the 772<sup>nd</sup> Military Police directly contributed to the stability of the region and should be recognized for their contributions and sacrifices," said Major General George W. Keefe, The Adjutant General for the Massachusetts National Guard.



Photo by Chief Warrant Officer Richard Woodlock, JFHQ-MA PAO

Gov. Mitt Romney extended the Massachusetts Military Reservation lease with the Army and Air Force on Sept. 24. He is shown here speaking to Guard personnel during the signing ceremony.

# Guard to close outdated and redundant armories

by Capt. Winfield Danielson, JFHQ-MA PAO

As the Massachusetts National Guard continues to modernize its forces and facilities, and to increase its fiscal efficiency in the current economic environment, it evaluated armories across the state and will permanently close some of these facilities. That said, the Massachusetts National Guard will continue to maintain a presence in every region in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and will remain ready to respond to domestic emergencies anywhere in the state.

The number of soldiers and airmen in the Massachusetts National Guard has been reduced over the past 20 years. Though some armories have been closed over that time, the number of armories we maintain still represents an approximate 20% overcapacity given our current authorized strength. This simply does not make sense in the current fiscal situation.

Additionally, a number of current facilities are outdated. These buildings feature outdated climate control systems and insulation, and would require major upgrades to accommodate modern telecommunications equipment. The expense of modernizing these armories cannot be justified when units can be moved to more modern facilities.

After a review of the current facilities across the state, The Adjutant General decided on a regional armory concept, which would both preserve the Mass. Guard's ability to support communities throughout the commonwealth and allow the closure of outdated and redundant facilities. The use of more modern facilities will actually increase the effectiveness of the Massachusetts National Guard while simultaneously increasing its fiscal efficiency.

## Affected armories:

*The following Massachusetts National Guard facilities are scheduled for closure or have closed:*

**Adams** – Dec.31

**Chelsea** – Dec. 31

**Natick (Central St.)** – Dec. 31

**New Bedford** – Dec.31

**Somerville** – Sept. 30

**Southbridge** – Dec. 31

**Westover (BLDG 7400)** – Sept. 30

**Weymouth** – Dec. 31

**Woburn** – Sept. 30

# More Mass. National Guard soldiers return from overseas duty

by Master Sgt. Pallas deBettencourt, JFHQ-MA PAO

The Massachusetts National Guard welcomed approximately 75 soldiers from the 211<sup>th</sup> Military Police Battalion, Lexington, back from overseas duty on Sept.17. The 211<sup>th</sup> provided security forces for troops supporting CENTCOM. Also, 10 members of the 86<sup>th</sup> Medical Detachment from Camp Edwards, Mass., returned home Sept. 10, after spending nearly 11 months overseas supporting Stabilization Force Rotation 13 in Bosnia-Herzegovina. As part of the 86<sup>th</sup> Air Ambulance Company, based in Vermont, the unit provided air medical evacuation support as part of a joint task force of soldiers from around the country.



Photo by Master Sgt. Pallas DeBettencourt, SJFHQ-MA PAO

A family member hugs an 86<sup>th</sup> Medical Detachment pilot who has just returned from Bosnia-Herzegovina. For security reasons the Massachusetts National Guard does not release the names or any identifying information on its pilots.